



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

St. Paul District

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Public Affairs

Corps Facts

Pool 5 Drawdown

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The River Resources Forum's Water Level Management Task Force, of which the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, is a member, proposed that the Corps initiate a drawdown of Pool 5 between June 15 and Sept. 30, 2005, to improve the area's aquatic habitat. This plan, which will take place if river flows fall within a required range, calls for a 2-foot drawdown at Lock and Dam 5, near Winona, Minn., if funding becomes available for "supplemental" main channel dredging or, alternatively, a 1.5-foot drawdown with currently available funding.

Why a drawdown?

A drawdown, which is also known as water level management, is a temporary, seasonal increase or decrease in water levels to mimic a natural river without the locks and dams. This method has been shown as a low cost way to improve large areas of shallow aquatic habitat that support fish and wildlife. Previous drawdowns of Pool 8 in 2001 and 2002 showed significant improvements in the growth of aquatic vegetation.

Drawdown Goals

The River Resources Forum's Water Level Management Task Force established the following goals for the 2005 Pool 5 drawdown:

- 1) Improve conditions for the growth of aquatic vegetation with special emphasis on perennial species;
- 2) Continue to operate and maintain the 9-foot channel project for commercial navigation;
- 3) Minimize any adverse effects on river recreational usage, such as maintaining boating access to a level acceptable to the public; and
- 4) Educate the public on the benefits of drawdowns.

Minimal Impacts to Navigation

Before lowering the pool, the Corps of Engineers will dredge the 9-foot river channel so that its proper depth is maintained throughout the drawdown. Hence, no impact on commercial navigation is expected. Additionally, a Citizens Advisory Committee previously identified recreational access needs during the drawdown and has proposed a plan to achieve a "reasonable" level of public access.

Project Status

The Corps of Engineers will decide, on March 1, 2005, as to what level to drawdown the pool, based on funding available at this time.

The Corps of Engineers prepared a draft environmental assessment, or EA, in January 2005, and has received and incorporated comments from federal and state resource agencies on the EA. The required 30-day public notice that the draft EA is available will be published in mid-March. After receiving comments from the public, the environmental assessment will be finalized, and the district engineer will sign a Finding of No Significant Impact, or FONSI. Additionally, the Corps will host another round of public meetings to explain the final environmental assessment and solicit further citizen feedback on the drawdown. The St. Paul District expects to have everything signed and ready to send to its division headquarters for approval by May 2005.